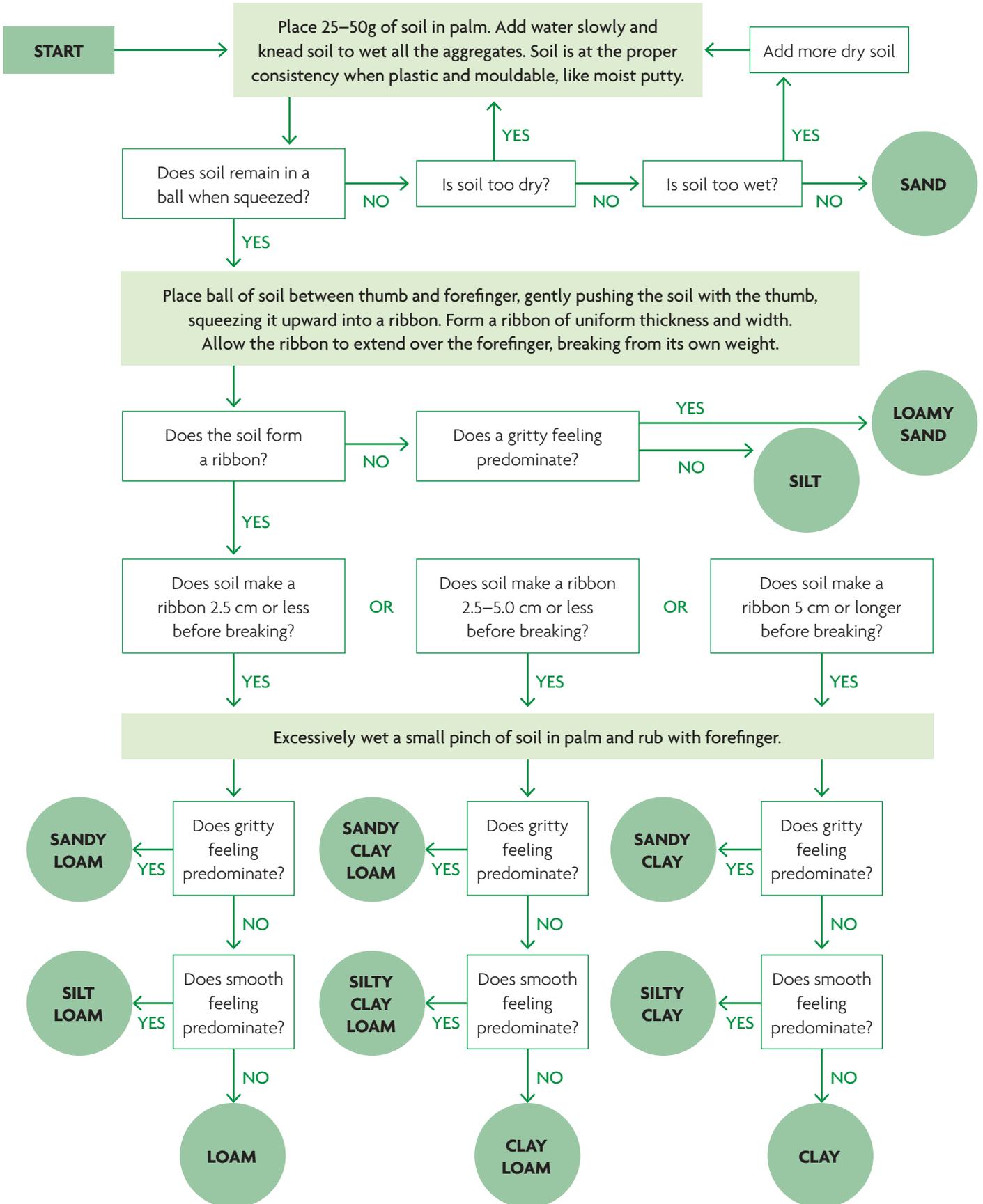


Determining soil texture



Modified from Thein, SJ (1979). A flow diagram for teaching texture by feel analysis. J Agron. Educ. 8: 54–55

Determining soil texture

STEP 1

Place some soil in your hand and use the spray mist bottle to moisten the soil. Let the water soak into the soil and then work it between your fingers until it is thoroughly moist. Once the soil is moist, try to form a ball. If the soil forms a ball, go on to Step 2. If the soil does not form a ball, call it a **SAND**.

STEP 2

Place the ball of soil between your thumb and index finger and gently push and squeeze it into a ribbon. If you can make a ribbon that is longer than 2.5 cm, go to Step 3. If the ribbon breaks apart before it reaches 2.5 cm, call it a **LOAMY SAND**.

STEP 3

If the soil:

- Is very sticky
- Hard to squeeze
- Stains your hands and has a shine when rubbed
- Forms a long ribbon (5+ cm) without breaking

Call it a **CLAY** and go to Step 4.

If the soil:

- Is somewhat sticky
- Is somewhat hard to squeeze
- Forms a medium ribbon (between 2 and 5 cm)

Call it a **CLAY LOAM** and go to Step 4

If the soil is:

- At most slightly sticky
- Easy to squeeze
- Smooth
- Forms a short ribbon (less than 2 cm)

Call it a **LOAM** and go to Step 4.

STEP 4

Wet a small pinch of the soil in your palm and rub it with a forefinger. If the soil:

- Feels very gritty every time you squeeze the soil, go to **A**
- Feels very smooth (like flour), with no gritty feeling, go to **B**
- Feels only a little gritty, go to **C**

A. Add the word **SANDY** to the initial classification.

Soil texture is either:

- **SANDY CLAY**
- **SANDY CLAY LOAM**
- **SANDY LOAM**

B. Add the word **SILT** or **SILTY** to the initial classification.

Soil texture is either:

- **SILTY CLAY**
- **SILTY CLAY LOAM**
- **SILT LOAM**

C. Leave the original classification.

Soil texture is either:

- **CLAY**
- **CLAY LOAM**
- **LOAM**